

Special Bulletin

For professional and facility providers

November 13, 2023

U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week & World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week

U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week (USAAW) and World Antimicrobial Resistance Week will occur **November 18–24** this year. USAAW involves collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state-based programs, and nonprofit and for-profit partners to educate providers on the best ways to:

- Improve the safe use of antibiotic and antifungal medications
- Increase awareness about antimicrobial resistance (AR) and how it poses a global threat
- Communicate effectively with patients about the appropriate use of antibiotics

Improving how healthcare professionals prescribe these medications can help patients avoid adverse events, fight antimicrobial resistance, and ensure these life-saving drugs will be available for future generations¹.

Below are strategies to consider regarding the use of antibiotics by patients:

- Avoid prescribing antibiotics for certain illnesses, such as acute bronchitis without pneumonia, when there is no comorbidity of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), pulmonary fibrosis, or other chronic lung disease.
- Inform patients of the potential side effects and adverse events related to antibiotic use, even when such antibiotics are necessary and appropriate.
- When antibiotics are prescribed, emphasize to patients the importance of taking them as directed and completing the prescription.

Antibiotic prescribing is a complex issue, but simple changes can potentially create a significant impact. For more information on antibiotic stewardship, see the resources below:

- [Free Educational Courses | CDC](#)
- [Health Department Resources | Antibiotic Use | CDC](#)
- [Be Antibiotics Aware Partner Toolkit | Antibiotic Use | CDC](#)
- [World AMR Awareness Week 2023 - Campaign Guide](#)

Highmark Resources

The Provider Resource Center (PRC) also offers the following educational materials:

- Antibiotic FAQs Card
- Antibiotic Flyer

To access these resources, go to the PRC, select **EDUCATION/MANUALS**, and then click **Educational Resources – Member And Provider**. Once on the page, you will find both of these documents under the *Information, Trackers and Tools* header.

References

¹<https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/week/get-involved.html>

Highmark does not recommend particular treatments or health care services. This information is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. You should determine the appropriate treatment and follow-up with your patient. Coverage of services is subject to the terms of each member's benefit plan. Additionally, state laws and regulations governing health insurance, health plans and coverage may apply and will vary from state to state.

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